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ABSTRACT

This guide is designed to help volunteers and teachers use English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) materials in the Free Library of Philadelphia's Reader Development Program collection. The first part is a general overview of ESL, including a description of approaches and methods for teaching. The second part presents suggestions for successful teaching, and describes how to create a supportive atmosphere for the student, emphasizing particular areas of concern when teachers or tutors work with adult ESL students. The third part discusses ESL literacy and offers teachers specific information to help identify, work with, teach, and select materials for ESL literacy students. The fourth part addresses ESL curriculum design, describing materials and considering ways that these materials can be used for instruction with individuals and groups. Thirteen specific areas are discussed separately: conversation, coping skills, listening, reading, pronunciation, writing, idioms, grammar, pre-vocational instruction, citizenship, testing, activities, and vocabulary. Appended materials include a description of the Reader Development Program; a grid showing appropriate curriculum areas and proficiency levels for which certain instructional materials are appropriate; a bibliography of curriculum materials; and a list of publishers, with addresses. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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# ESL

# CURRICULUM • GUIDE •

MATERIALS AND METHODS FOR TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE TO ADULTS

Karen Batt • Ellen Furstenberg • Judy Reitzes

THE FREE LIBRARY OF PHILADELPHIA

October, 1988

The Free Library of Philadelphia

For more information about English as a Second Language and Adult Basic Education materials, contact:

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Dedicated to our students
who have taught us
so much.

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# INTRODUCTION

Philadelphia, a city rich in cultural diversity, has grown to include nationalities from all over the world. With this diversity, the need for English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction has grown dramatically.

The Reader Development Program (RDP) of The Free Library of Philadelphia has had a unique role in adult education since 1967. Rather than duplicate programs, the RDP staff has used the expertise and perspective of the public library to locate, select, purchase and provide free materials to adult education programs. In addition to providing books to programs for native speakers of English, RDP has been providing ESL materials since its onset.

In the last decade, there have been significant changes in the population of adults needing ESL programs in Philadelphia. There has been a major migration of Southeast Asian people to the city. The Spanish speaking population, primarily Puerto Rican in the past, has grown to include other Caribbean groups and Central and South Americans. In addition, a variety of other groups have migrated to Philadelphia and need English as a Second Language instruction. All of these groups and individuals have come to Philadelphia with differing educational backgrounds and needs.

In the summer of 1986, the Mayor's Commission on Literacy launched a campaign aimed at the Hispanic population. As requests for materials to teach English to Spanish speakers increased, Reader Development Program staff were reminded of something they had known for some time: the RDP collection of materials for teaching ESL needed to be examined and updated.

Moreover, the Mayor's Commission on Literacy during the past five years has facilitated the recruitment of ESL volunteers and the start of new small programs. Therefore, the need for materials continues to grow. Also, the number of ESL materials being published is on the rise as publishers have realized that a larger market now exists.

Noting these trends, the RDP staff saw the need to review, update, and expand its current collection to match the needs of ESL students and the existing ESL programs that serve them. In 1987, the Free Library submitted and received a Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) grant to review materials and develop a curriculum guide that would assist volunteers and teachers in the use of the RDP-ESL collection. The method chosen was to hire three ESL educators to review materials, select those most needed, and write a curriculum guide.

These three ESL educators have worked jointly on the project since October, 1987. Ideas for this curriculum guide came from the stated goals of the project, the past experience of the staff, and discussions during the project year. The primary audience for the guide is volunteer ESL tutors in Philadelphia. These tutors have had varying amounts of training and experience.

In order to determine what ESL materials are being used and what kinds are most needed, the ESL consultants wrote and circulated a questionnaire to 50 programs in Philadelphia. They received a response greater than 50% and have used the results in making their selections for the permanent collection. The largest number of requests were for conversation, listening comprehension, pronunciation, and reading materials. The ESL consultants have responded to these requests by selecting a range of materials for various skills and levels.

This guide should prove useful not only for tutors, its primary audience, but also for various kinds of educators in different educational settings: teachers, curriculum developers, teacher and tutor trainers, program administrators and planners, ESL resource centers, libraries, school districts, literacy programs, colleges and universities, vocational programs, ESL professional organizations, and general teachers' organizations. It should also provide useful background for the staff of unions, community organizations, churches, clearinghouses, and advocacy groups that are dealing with adults whose first language is not English.

The guide is organized as follows:

The first part is a general overview of ESL including a description of approaches and methods of teaching.

The second part presents suggestions for successful teaching. It describes how to create a supportive atmosphere for the student. It also emphasizes particular areas of concern when teachers or tutors work with adult ESL students.

The third part discusses ESL literacy, an area that is often overlooked. This section of the guide is designed to help instructors identify ESL literacy students and work with them more effectively.

The fourth part discusses the curriculum itself. It is arranged by categories:

conversation, coping skills, listening, reading, pronunciation, writing, idioms, grammar, pre-vocational, tests, activities and vocabulary. This part describes materials and considers the specific ways in which they may be used in the instructional process. It describes some teaching techniques that can be used with individuals and groups.

The appendices provide a more detailed explanation of the RDP collection (those books available in multiple copies). A grid shows the categories of ESL materials and levels. This grid includes the titles of the materials and indicates the levels for which they are most appropriate. A bibliography and a list of publishers' addresses follow the grid.

This guide was written by the ESL consultants for the project: Karen Batt, Ellen Furstenberg, and Judy Reitzes. These three experienced ESL practitioners have taught ESL to adults for many years in a variety of settings and have faced the practical problems and dilemmas of teaching ESL. Karen has had the major role in the writing of the guide. She is experienced as a teacher, curriculum developer, and writer. Ellie has experience working and teaching in community-based programs and has taught all levels of ESL including ESL literacy. Judy has written curriculum for ESL literacy and taught pre-vocational ESL. All three have worked with multi-ethnic groups at the beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels.

The authors have written the guide with three purposes in mind: to explain the uniqueness of ESL students, to describe techniques that enable tutors to work more successfully with students, and to present examples of ESL materials that will be helpful to ESL instructors and their students.

# ESL OVERVIEW

English as a Second Language (ESL) or English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is a special field within adult education with its own body of research, theories, methods, and techniques.

In the area of Adult Basic Education (ABE) and General Educational Development (GED) the students are native speakers or advanced ESL students. Their task, which is not an easy one, is to recognize and use the known language in print. They do not need help in understanding or speaking English. In fact, a literacy student who is a native speaker already has an extensive vocabulary.

ESL students, however, must learn each new word. They must learn to understand and speak American English. Simultaneously, they must think about fluency, pronunciation, and grammar. Then they have the double task of learning how to read and write in a second language.

Most ESL students in Philadelphia are faced with a new culture. They have left the familiarity of their own culture—sometimes against their will, as in the case of refugees—and are confronted with a new one. There is often cultural conflict, since their traditions may differ from those of the United States. Day-to-day experiences which native English speakers take for granted may seem confusing or overwhelming to ESL students.

Most ESL students, while experiencing the stresses of learning a new language and adjusting to a new culture, are also dealing with the same adult responsibilities and pressures many Americans face. These pressures include: finding and keeping a job; finding housing; and dealing with urban problems, such as crime, drugs, and living in poor neighborhoods.

The ESL class may be the first place that brings students into contact with an English speaker. The class or tutoring session can aid in breaking

the sense of isolation often experienced by immigrants or refugees. Therefore, providing an atmosphere of openness and trust in the classroom is essential.

Working in a small group, rather than one to one, is preferable in teaching ESL. A small group allows for more interaction among the students and more varied conversation practice. A group format takes the focus away from the teacher as the central figure. It can promote a more cooperative approach to teaching. However, if tutors are working one to one, there are types of supplemental activities for students which can further their practice. For example, tutors can perform role plays with students and assign out-of-class work that encourages students to go places where they will have to use the language practiced in class. Also, tutors can go places outside the class with their students. Going to a supermarket or restaurant can provide the kind of language practice that is not possible in a classroom setting. In this way students will have other people to speak to in addition to the teacher.

Most ESL programs include students who range in level of proficiency from beginners through advanced. Within each level students can also vary in their abilities. In addition, level designations will vary between programs. One program's high beginners may be another's low intermediate. For this reason, it is difficult to have an exact definition of each level. However, for the purpose of this guide the following is a description of what we generally mean when we refer to levels.

The beginning level includes ESL students who may be "true beginners"—those people who cannot speak or understand a word of English. Other beginners can understand a little and answer some basic words or phrases, such as: "How are you?", "What's your name?" and "What's your address?" There are also beginning students who do not speak or understand but are able to read written English.

A high beginner can understand and, in a limited way, use some basic structures and basic survival vocabulary. These students can use English in some situations, such as buying things, asking for information, and making appointments. Sentences are often incomplete, and students often hesitate as they try to find the correct structures or vocabulary.

Intermediate students can understand and express themselves in English. Mistakes in grammar are common, but these students can generally be understood. They can handle most common "survival" situations. Listening comprehension is often incomplete; that is, some students find it difficult to understand English spoken at a normal rate when unfamiliar vocabulary is used or when the situation is unfamiliar.

Advanced students can express themselves with little hesitation and with a good deal of fluency. They can use most structures and understand more difficult vocabulary. They are often used as informal translators in their communities. They usually read some English; for example, they may read newspaper articles.

ESL students may also vary in their level of literacy in English, depending on their own native language literacy or familiarity with written symbols. The issue of ESL literacy is a special one and will be dealt with more completely in the section on ESL Literacy.

Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are the language skills usually taught in adult ESL programs. These skills are emphasized or combined to varying degrees depending on the needs of the adults being served. There are several types of ESL curricula. They may include one or more of the following:

1. General ESL—i.e. listening, speaking, reading, pronunciation, grammar, writing and coping skills
2. Vocational ESL (VESL)—language needed for a specific job
3. Pre-vocational ESL—English needed for any job
4. Academic ESL—college level English
5. English for special purposes (ESP)—i.e. engineering
6. ESL literacy

In summary, ESL is a special field where students are both being taught a new language and also being exposed to a new culture. What will work best has to be worked out with students, and that will vary depending on their background, levels, and needs.

# APPROACHES AND METHODS

Over the years various methods have been used to teach language. For many years language was taught by translating each word or phrase. However, by the post-World War II period, this approach was beginning to be replaced with the overall view that learners acquire language through practice in the target language rather than through translation.

The *audio-lingual method* became popular by the 1950's. It was characterized by presentation of oral language before written, extensive pattern practice through drills, and dialogue memorization. Students were not encouraged to say anything on their own. It was believed that their mistakes would become a habit.

In the 1970's, the audio-lingual approach was criticized for its tendency to concentrate too heavily on drills and to teach language out of context. Practitioners began to encourage real-life language practice and discourage an overabundance of drilled pattern practice. The need for students to make mistakes was accepted as part of language acquisition.

The new movement in language learning strived for *communicative competence*—the ability to understand and use language in specific situations, such as asking for directions, making appointments with doctors, and buying tickets. Recent methodology recognizes that it is not enough for students to know the linguistics of language (grammar and syntax). Students need to know when, how, and with whom to use language. They need to know when to use formal and informal language. Communicative competence implies the understanding of non-verbal communication as well as verbal.

Another approach which has generally been applied to adult literacy is the *learner-centered approach*. More recently ESL practitioners have seen it as useful and relevant to teaching ESL. With this approach, themes of reading, writing and discussion come from the students. Topics that are critical to students' lives are incorporated in the curriculum. Instead of the teacher's being the main focus, the teacher acts as a facilitator and participates in the group. She or he does not play the traditional role of expert.

Today, there are several methods which can be used in teaching ESL. Most ESL practitioners are *eclectic* in their approach and draw on several different methods, taking some positive aspects of each. Some practices have been retained from audio-lingualism, such as an oral focus through dialogues and the use of visuals. However, new methodologies now share more tolerance for student errors, and contain more practice based on real-life situations and increased student initiative.

Among the many methods in use are:

1. *Community Language Learning*—This is also called Counseling Learning and reflects a concern for positive human relationships. Students initiate what they want to be able to say and the tutor or teacher is used as a resource.
2. *The Natural Approach*—This approach has a strong focus on providing listening activities for students. Speech is never forced. Correction occurs only in writing assignments. Students tolerate a certain amount of language that has not been formally introduced.
3. *Silent Way*—Teachers speak very little, and time is provided for students to digest what they have heard. In addition, students must take the major responsibility for initiating oral practice based on the small bits of language being introduced by the teacher.
4. *Total Physical Response* (TPR)—This method concentrates on listening. In a long initial phase, the teacher talks the majority of the time. Students silently respond to command forms.

These are different methods that will enrich your teaching and you may want to explore them. They do require practice and are best learned through training at workshops and conferences which are sometimes offered by local organizations and colleges.

Every tutor or teacher will develop a style of working creatively with adult students. Those of us who have written the guide urge you to try your own ideas and materials as well as the ideas suggested here.

# ESL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Adult students come to their ESL class or tutoring session with considerable experience and knowledge. But often, they need time to become accustomed to the class or the tutoring situation. Setting up an atmosphere where students feel comfortable, either in a tutoring or classroom setting, is one of the most important things we can do. Something as simple as having the students and teacher sit in a circle or around a table says something to the students immediately—they are part of the group. Even those who do not know English can say their name and where they are from by the end of the first class. The instructor also shares information. A community, a sense of group solidarity, is being built. It is important that the focus be on forming a cohesive group where the teacher is a part of the group.

Working in pairs and small groups of which the teacher is a part shows students that they can learn from one another. The fact that students see themselves as participants rather than passive recipients of information is critical.

The idea of learner-centered rather than teacher-centered education has generally been applied to adult literacy students whose native language is English, but the idea is equally important in the ESL classroom. In spite of the fact that students may not have the words, they can be resources to one another. Students who know more English can generate ideas and themes to be worked on in their lessons. When students discuss topics that they are interested in, rather than focusing on how they are constructing English, they speak better and learn more quickly. They worry less about English and can concentrate more on voicing opinions. For example, in a classroom discussion on AIDS, a student forgot her inhibitions about speaking English when she was talking about someone she knew who had died of AIDS. Her English became more fluent.

This learner-centered approach may seem difficult to implement in a tutoring situation. The important thing to remember is that the tutor and student can share as equals and build a cooperative relationship. The student's

issues and interests can be incorporated into the tutoring session.

That is not to say that we as teachers or tutors do not or should not impart information or give explanations at times. Sometimes it is appropriate to give information, while at other times it is important for students to initiate and work with instructors and with other students.

The process, then, is as important as the product. The goal of setting up an atmosphere where students feel comfortable making mistakes is more important than producing grammatically perfect sentences or perfectly pronounced phrases. If students feel comfortable enough to take risks, they will be more able to do that outside the classroom as well.

As instructors, we also need to be careful not to plan lessons or exercises that could put our students in difficult situations or make them feel uncomfortable. For example, if we are working on a matrix, an exercise in which students practice asking each other questions (explained more fully in the Conversation section of this guide), we need to be aware that we do not want to ask the question, "What's your social security number?" Our students may not be documented (have legal immigration status) and may not have social security numbers. Another example is in the area of pronunciation practice. Some students with difficulty in this area may not want to be singled out in front of the whole group to practice what is giving them trouble. In this case, it may be more effective to work with the student individually.

All students learn differently and at different rates. We as instructors must continually remind our students that it takes time to learn a language and we need to point out our students' progress frequently.

As instructors, we often find ourselves teaching in a situation where we have many different levels of students in the same group or class. Dealing with a multi-level group is one of the most difficult things we face. It takes patience and creativity. It is important to remind our students that every student has different strengths and weaknesses. Some students will be strong in the area of speaking and have problems with reading and writing, and others will have no problems with writing and have difficulty pronouncing clearly. Some students may become impatient in the group if they are more advanced or frustrated if they are less advanced. Explaining that everyone has strengths and weaknesses and building a supportive environment help students learn to be more tolerant of one another.

There are no easy answers in teaching multi-level groups. It is a difficult dilemma for even the most experienced tutor or teacher. Instructors must try different techniques, such as pair work, small group work, and individualized work for students. When students are working at different levels or rates of speed, tutors and teachers can sometimes give additional or more difficult work to the more advanced students.

ESL students have many pressures that we as instructors need to be sen-

sitive to and aware of when we are teaching. They are adjusting to a new culture and a new language, and many have economic pressures. Furthermore, many have the pressure of the loss of status when they come to the United States. They may have had a higher status in their countries or may have been respected in their communities or neighborhoods. When they come here they often have none of that.

Many of our students are dealing with the loss of family or friends whom they have left in their own countries. They also have the pressure of handling responsibilities at home, particularly if they are women. They must not only cope with their own sense of loss, confusion and insecurity but that of their families, too. If they are undocumented they feel an even greater pressure of fear of being deported or "found out."

Furthermore, many students may feel the pressure of loss of status within the family. Children may be translating for adults, parents, or even grandparents, which can set up painful role confusion and family tension. Seeing children assimilate and sometimes lose or reject their native culture and language is an additional stress.

It is helpful if we as instructors recognize and bring out the cultural richness and diversity we have in our classes. Even if our classes are made up of the same language group there is often considerable diversity. The classroom is a good place for students and teachers to learn about this. If we are tutoring, we also need to emphasize the rich cultural backgrounds of our students. In the classroom or tutoring situation, students can talk about, read about, and write about different aspects of their cultures and compare and contrast them with the culture of the United States. Something as simple as Halloween, for example, can be used as a way of talking about students' countries and cultures. Do they celebrate the holiday? Is there a similar holiday in their countries? Is there a holiday that is especially for children? Is there a time when people dress up in costumes?

One recurring issue is the use of the students' native language in the ESL classroom. It is important to remember that the translation is not the goal in an ESL classroom. However, if the teacher speaks the first language in a monolingual group, there are some situations where it is helpful to use the students' native language, such as in meeting with the new students, making announcements, and, occasionally, speaking in the classroom. Speaking the native language develops trust and makes the students feel more at ease.

However, the teacher needs to be sensitive if the group is multi-lingual. The use of the native language of some of the students can make the other students feel left out or not favored. That must be taken into consideration, and the teacher must judge her or his own group.

In bilingual programs where one language group is served, teaching subject or content areas in the first language while simultaneously offering ESL

instruction has proven particularly valuable. In Philadelphia, bilingual education is available in some places for children. Adapting the theories of bilingual education to ESL instruction for adults has begun in other parts of the United States. In the Southwest, West and New York where bilingual education is stronger and more accepted, adult students are learning literacy in their first language, while simultaneously, or soon afterwards, learning English. Regardless of whether the program is bilingual or monolingual, the curriculum of the ESL classroom or tutoring session should reflect the needs and interests of students. Besides providing instruction in basic skills or grammatical points, curriculum should emphasize intercultural understanding and diversity.

There is no one method that works and no one book that works. Most experienced ESL instructors are eclectic, trying different approaches and using different materials in the class. It is important to remember that there is no single book that teaches every skill students need. We must use many sources, adapting and developing materials appropriate for our particular students. It is also a priority to choose materials that help our students understand and cope with their lives in urban Philadelphia.

ESL students often face discrimination based on race, sex, and class in their lives. Even within the classroom or tutoring situation the instructors must deal with tensions and stereotypes, which differ among groups or nationalities. Moreover, students who have been successful in their own countries may face a drop in social status and may be working in low-paying, menial jobs where they face discrimination. Within the classroom the teacher must be sensitive to the fact that she or he may be from a different background, race, or socio-economic class from the students. Recognizing that fact, the instructor can set up an atmosphere where students feel free to talk about differences. This is an important step in dealing with what can be a big gap in understanding. We as instructors must try not to make excuses or be defensive. In addition, we must check that we are not forcing our conscious or unconscious values on our students. For example, we may feel that to be successful students should go to college. This idea of success may not be a value that is shared by our students. It is important to examine our assumptions and keep them in check.

As teachers, we should be conscious of the undercurrents of racism, classism or sexism and try to enable our students to talk about those issues. For example, in a classroom discussion about discrimination, a group of mostly Puerto Rican ESL students said that they felt no discrimination. When the teacher asked more specific questions, such as whether the students ever felt people were looking down on them because they were Puerto Rican or because they had accents, the students all agreed that this had happened to them. With more detailed questions, students opened up and talked about examples of racism they had experienced. The teacher needed to let the students know that she was not expecting a certain answer. The students may have initially said that they did not experience discrimination because the teacher was white and a native of the United States. They may have

felt that because of the race and class differences between the teacher and students, the teacher would be offended by a criticism of the United States. However, when the teacher asked more specific questions and let the students know that it was acceptable to talk about the issues frankly, a truer picture was presented by the students.

Just as racism and classism are issues in the classroom, so too is sexism. Students from other cultures may come to the class or to the tutoring session with ideas of what is appropriate or acceptable behavior between men and women. Such ideas may not be consistent with what is appropriate in the United States. For example, some women may not want to speak in front of men or work in a pair with a man. Male students may not be comfortable with a female teacher. These barriers must be recognized and worked on sensitively. If a woman student, for example, appears uncomfortable working with a male partner, the teacher should allow her to work with a woman. If the teacher does not insist that she work with a man, later in the year, after feeling more comfortable, the student may change and feel able to practice English in a pair with a man.

Finally, it is important to remember that our students are intimidated by the "red pencil", or overcorrection. Our students are adults. They can often correct their own work and then know what they, themselves, need to study. Often, correction of exercises can be done in the whole group. Students who wish to can take turns writing their answers on the board. All students can then check their papers, and correct their own work. In this way students see for themselves what they need to study.

It is not necessary for instructors to correct every error in speech or writing. It is more effective to correct only those errors in writing or speech that relate to what you are working on or what students have already studied with you.

Lastly, instructors need to remember and appreciate that working with adult students from different cultures is a unique experience. As well as teaching a new language and exposing students to a new culture, we as instructors are also learning and being exposed to new ideas, customs, and cultures that enrich and broaden our lives.

# ESL LITERACY

Sometimes ESL students who want to learn English have limited or no literacy skills in their first language. Some can neither read nor write in their first language and some may do so in a very limited way. For the most part these students have gone to school for only a few years. Generally all have little confidence in their ability to read and write, they often have low self esteem, and they tend to downplay their abilities or strengths.

## DISTINCTIONS AMONG ESL LITERACY STUDENTS

All ESL literacy students do not have the same problems. There are those students who have had very little education or barely read or write in their first language and who cannot read or write or speak English. These students are the most difficult to teach because they have no native language literacy skills.

In addition, there are those students who read or write a little in their native language, but do not speak, read or write English. They have some literacy skills in their first language and can therefore learn reading and writing in English more easily than the first group mentioned.

Finally, there are those students who speak English well or fairly understandably but have had limited education or literacy skills in their native language. Instructors can use these students' oral skills to help them learn to read and write English. For example, they can use the Language Experience Approach, a method in which students create their own stories and learn from them. This approach will be explained in more detail later.

# IDENTIFYING ESL LITERACY STUDENTS

An early way to determine if students will have problems with literacy is to ask some questions at the initial interview. It is best if the interviewer can ask the questions in the students' native language. These questions, however, can be asked in English if the students speak a little English. Asking how many years of school the students have completed in their native country and how comfortable they feel reading and writing in their first language is helpful in identifying these students.

An additional way to identify ESL literacy students is for the instructors to give students a simple form to fill out with personal information (name, address, and so forth) at the initial interview. This may be in their native language. The form should have lenty of space because ESL literacy students' writing is often very large. Many ESL literacy students will have difficulty filling out the form. Some will have problems forming the letters and may not be able to write on the line. They may not be able to complete the form if they lack understanding or knowledge of writing or reading.

Students with limited native language literacy skills often find it difficult to copy from the board. They may say they don't see well or have forgotten their glasses, when in fact, they have problems with reading and writing. When these students do write, instructors may discover that certain students do not hold a pencil or form letters correctly.

# TECHNIQUES AND CONCERNS IN WORKING WITH ESL LITERACY STUDENTS

Once identified, ESL literacy students need special help. Using large print material is helpful. Also, providing large amounts of space to write answers is useful, for such students usually have not had enough practice to write small. Those who need practice with their writing or printing can be given exercises for extra practice. Several books are available from the Reader Development Program which teach handwriting and printing.

It is useful to provide extra oral work or activities for ESL literacy students. After experiencing success with oral activities, generally students' self-esteem will increase enough for them to try to attack the more difficult reading and writing activities. In addition, the same oral activities can be turned into writing and reading tasks that students will recognize. Because they are already familiar with the activities, the exercises will be easier for them.

ESL literacy students should have enough time to do their work. Many of these students have not had much schooling and need extra time to do such simple tasks as copying from a blackboard or book. In a class of students with a range of literacy skills, it is particularly important to allow for differences in work speed. Giving ESL literacy students the time they need to copy and write will allow them to be successful in their work.

Following directions, especially written directions, is often difficult for ESL literacy students. Directions to written exercises should be thoroughly explained orally, with examples. The instructors should always try to pick up on non-verbal cues and to observe if students are beginning to work on the exercises after the explanation. Again, it must be remembered that these students have not had a lot of education and following instructions takes practice.

In addition, individualizing students' work is important with ESL literacy students. Although it is difficult in most ESL classrooms, where there are often many levels represented in one class, it is particularly beneficial to do this for the limited literacy student. These students are often confused by the regular reading and writing in an ESL classroom, even at the beginner level. To identify these students and give them appropriate work can make a big difference. Pairing or grouping students of the same level to practice different tasks can be supportive as well as effective for ESL literacy students.

Many ESL literacy students are not comfortable in a classroom setting or working with a tutor. Great efforts, then, must be made to set up a supportive learning environment.

## APPROACHES IN TEACHING ESL LITERACY STUDENTS

There are many different ways to work with ESL literacy students. Using a mixture of approaches is particularly effective. Doing this not only varies the lessons, but also keeps the students interested.

The Language Experience Approach is very useful for students who have some oral proficiency in English but have problems reading and writing. Students in the group discuss a topic or issue. Then the teacher transcribes what the individual group members say and a story is created. Students use their own words, and their own thoughts and opinions are made into a story. After the story is completed, students copy it. These stories can then be a basis for reading, writing, and oral practice.

According to the traditional Language Experience Approach, the grammar is not corrected in the initial story, for this inhibits students from saying what they want to say. Because ESL literacy students especially need to feel free to read and write, the original concept of the Language Ex-

perience Approach, where the instructor transcribes students' words exactly as they express them, works best. Today, however, some instructors have adapted the approach to accomplish other goals and practice different skills. Some teachers encourage students to participate in correcting grammar. This works best with students who have some grammatical background and who would not be intimidated by the correction process. Whenever the Language Experience approach is used, it is important to remember that the purpose of the approach is to enable students to express their ideas, and to use the students' own ideas and stories as the basis for instruction. In addition to being creative, students have an opportunity to experience, in a real way, their ability to discuss and write about complex issues even though their reading and writing skills may be limited.

In addition to the Language Experience Approach, another way of working with ESL literacy students is to choose exercises from a standard ESL text which are appropriate though not specifically directed to low literacy students. These exercises or stories can be enlarged on a photocopy machine so that ESL literacy students can read them better. Often, exercises may need to be adapted so that they can be used with low literacy students. Also instructors can create their own exercises, keeping their individual students in mind.

One useful book which also has the advantage of having large print is **Survival English**. (Books 1 and 2 are described more fully in the Coping Skills section.) It is appropriate for those students who read simple English. It uses repetition. Also, it provides varied exercises that give instruction on the same grammatical points so that students receive considerable practice. Exercises are divided into small parts so that students can practice discrete points. This is helpful for ESL literacy students who often need extra practice on particular lessons.

The phonics approach can be useful for some students, although it has definite limitations for the adult ESL student. If it is combined with other approaches it can help certain students. Practicing and identifying sounds can be beneficial. The words from a Language Experience story or another reading that have the same sound can be extracted by the group with the help of the instructor. The instructor then helps the students think of other words they may know in English that have the same sound. The particular sound then is practiced by students.

In the same way the instructor can practice word families. This is done by taking a word from a Language Experience story or a reading and having the students think of other words of the same family. For example, if the word "stamp" appeared in the Language Experience story, students might think of "camp", "lamp", "damp", "ramp", and so forth. If they do not know many of the words in the family the instructor helps them to supply more of the words in the family. Students then are using a word from their own story to learn word families.

Sight words can be practiced using the same techniques. Sight words par-

ticularly useful in daily life or words frequently repeated in readings, can be extracted from the readings or from students' speech and writing. These words can be the basis for lessons and further practice.

The phonics and sight word approaches, although useful, should not be overused, for they tend to separate meaning from content, and can be boring for the students.

## MATERIALS FOR ESL LITERACY STUDENTS

Some educators believe that teaching students to read and write in their native language first is a more sensible approach than teaching students these skills in a second language. Students can then transfer those skills to English. However, the political and practical reality is that such training is not available in Philadelphia or in many other areas. Therefore, we as ESL tutors and teachers must try to develop or adapt existing materials in English appropriate for ESL literacy students.

For the most basic student, the instructors must use a lot of oral work. Pre-literacy skills are necessary for these students. They need exercises in visual discrimination. For example, they might pick out the "s" letter in a row of different letters which includes "s". The series **Entry to English** (described more fully in the Reading section) provides practice in some of these skills. At the same time, these students can practice printing or cursive writing, depending on their level. Practice with sight words and survival words is beneficial, as is identifying sounds. Learning to read and fill out simple forms is a good goal. Listening exercises are important, and such books as **Before Book I** (described more fully in the Listening section) can be used by students who do not know how to write.

For the next level students, those who read a little, such books as **Survival English I and II** can be used to accompany the classroom work or the work with the tutor. These students can read a little, so books with large print that provide considerable practice on the same grammatical points are particularly useful.

As was mentioned previously, for the higher level ESL literacy students, those who can speak but have limited education in their first language, the Language Experience Approach works well. Standard ESL texts can also be used, enlarging the print using a photocopy machine, adapting, and leaving out exercises that are too difficult for the ESL literacy student.

Review and repetition are crucial with all of these students. For the tutor or teacher, as well as for the students, it is important to remember that progress takes time. Therefore, small strides should be viewed as great accomplishments.

# ESL CURRICULUM

The following sections deal with thirteen specific areas of teaching ESL. In most of the areas we make some general comments about the area and then recommend specific techniques or materials.

We have arranged the topics in the order of priority given by the results of the survey of local adult education programs and by the opinions of the ESL consultants as well.

## CONVERSATION

ESL students often ask for extra practice in English conversation, and they do so with good reason. Many of them live in neighborhoods where their native language is widely spoken. Some even have jobs where they are surrounded by people who speak their first language. Therefore, they have limited opportunities to practice their English.

When they do speak to Americans, the situation is often filled with tension. Often the limited English speaker is asked to repeat time after time. When the limited English speaker doesn't understand something that is said, Americans often raise their voices as though the person had a hearing problem instead of a language problem.

In these interactions no one is comfortable, so it is little wonder that ESL students value the opportunity to practice in an atmosphere of calm, acceptance, and understanding.

In general, conversation techniques and materials fall into two broad categories—those which are more structured for the student and those which are less structured. It is profitable to use both, if possible, because different students have different learning styles. In addition, the structured materials offer psychological "safety"; they put less burden on the learner. On the

other hand, the less structured materials offer more personal involvement. They challenge the learner to draw on his or her resources and use them.

Structured activities are exemplified by dialogues, pattern practice, and substitution exercises. These are explained below. The student's attention is focused on only one or two new points at a time. A chapter in **Side by Side, Book One** illustrates this structuring. There are eight pictures of individuals and pairs doing things. The grammar being practiced is the present progressive tense. Under each picture are an incomplete question and answer about the picture. The names of the people and the activity being performed are supplied by the authors; therefore, it is a structured exercise. The following is the kind of exercise presented:

_____John and Mary doing?
_____cooking dinner.

The student is asked to focus only on the correct question word, "What" and the correct plural form of the verb, "are" in the question. In the answer, the student is asked to focus only on the correct pronoun and verb, "They're". The pattern is the present progressive tense, which is repeated in each picture. The student makes substitutions for the pronouns (i.e. he, she, we, they) and forms of "be" (am, is, are).

Another kind of structured activity involves having the student or class members memorize or read a dialogue. A dialogue is a conversation which shows how the target structure is used. The lines to be learned are supplied by the author. Dialogues are found in many ESL books.

The use of a matrix is another somewhat structured activity for tutor or teacher to use. The matrix is an extremely useful tool in teaching ESL at all levels, including literacy. It is a way for students to speak and share with one another, while at the same time practicing reading, writing, and listening. It is valuable in creating a comfortable classroom atmosphere. The following is an example of a matrix for a begining level group or student:

| What's your name? | What are you wearing today? | Are you thirsty today? | Are you wearing socks? | Are you sitting now? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

Students ask each other the questions in the matrix and write the answers

in the spaces provided below the questions. Students go around the room asking other students the questions provided and writing the responses. Depending on the students' literacy level and the goal of the matrix they can write words, phrases or complete sentences. For example, in response to the question "What are you wearing today?" the written answer could be "blue skirt, white blouse, black shoes", or "She's wearing a blue skirt, a white blouse, and black shoes." Students can also practice the "I" form and answer the questions for themselves. Such techniques can be used to practice a particular structure, to contrast structures, to practice using daily information, to talk about likes and dislikes, to emphasize cultural differences and customs, and so forth.

To practice a given structure, or review questions that have been learned, the instructor can give the students a blank matrix and students can make up the questions to ask one another. Students then not only develop the questions, but also ask them and write the responses. A matrix can also be used when teachers or tutors give only a cue. For example, the teacher writes the cue "Have you ever...?" and the students complete the questions on the matrix. Then they ask one another the questions they have developed. In addition, students can take a matrix and practice outside the classroom by asking questions of family members, friends or neighbors who speak English. Matrices can be found in some books, such as **A Conversation Book: English in Everyday Life, Book I**. They are also very easy to create without using a textbook. We recommend them for all teaching and tutoring situations.

A grid exercise is similar to the preceding matrix exercise, but it has some differences as well. The teacher or tutor chooses a structure to study. The purpose is to give the student or class practice in making positive and negative statements.

In the example below, the present tense is used. The teacher draws the following grid on a blackboard, flip chart, or paper large enough for all participants to see. She then chooses items which she thinks can elicit both "yes" and "no" answers.

Items in a Wallet

| names of the students | a photo | a work ID card | a library card | a driver's license |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Maria | ✓ | X | X | ✓ |
| Thanh | ✓ | ✓ | X | X |
| Romeny | ✓ | ✓ | X | X |
| Juan | ✓ | X | X | ✓ |
| Karen (the teacher's name) | ✓ | X | ✓ | ✓ |

The instructor then says, "Everyone look in your wallets. Maria, do you have a photograph of someone?" Maria answers "yes" and a check is put in the appropriate box. The teacher asks (or the students could ask each other) the rest of the questions until the grid is filled.

Then with the use of a pointer or a finger the instructor says, "Tell me about Maria," indicating the four boxes beside Maria's name. A volunteer will say (with prompting if needed), "She has a photo, but she doesn't have a work ID card. She doesn't have a library card, but she has a driver's license."

The instructor asks for another volunteer to tell about other people on the grid. After the statements are proceeding smoothly, she can say, "Maria, tell me about *you*." Maria will say, "I have a photo, but I don't have a work ID card" and so forth. The use of the other pronouns can be practiced in this way. "Someone tell me about Thanh and Romeny." Simultaneously she points to the boxes she wants practiced; for example, "They have photos and they have work ID cards, but they don't have library cards and they don't have driver's licenses."

The teacher is structuring the speaking, but on the other hand she is eliciting all of the speech from the students. The instructor is speaking very little, which is—in the opinion of many practitioners—a goal of a good teacher or tutor.

Later, this same grid can be used to teach and give practice with echo auxiliaries. These are the short forms of positive and negative agreement used in English, such as "So do I", "Neither do I", "I do too", and "I don't either". The instructor will give some models, explaining that this is a way we can say something long in a short way. For example, "Thanh has a work ID card and so does Romeny" or "Romeny doesn't have a library card and neither does Juan".

Grids can also be used to practice any tense, modal (for example, can, might, must, and so forth) or structure, such as tag questions (i.e. "She has a driver's license, doesn't she?").

Less structured exercises are very different from the structured exercises explained above. They encourage students to recall what they already know. The teacher supplies the unknown elements only as needed.

The use of picture series is an example of less structured oral practice. A picture series is, as the name implies, a series of pictures (frames) which tell a story. The comics section of a newspaper is full of picture series. The number of frames in each may differ. If cartoons from the newspaper are to be used, the dialogue must be removed first and the same story (or, at least some story) must be clear without it.

There are several commercially-produced books containing picture series for ESL students. We recommend **What's the Story?** This series consists

of four levels of student's books and a set of four large wall charts which contain 12 separate four-frame picture series. They are black and white photographs. There is no printed dialogue with the pictures so they are a visual stimulus for speaking. The students' books each contain the same four-frame stories in reduced size. Book One (for high beginners or low intermediates) contains a written version of each story. The books at the other three levels offer a "fill-in-the-blanks" version of the stories. All four books contain reading and vocabulary exercises. Book 4 is only recommended for very advanced ESL students and, therefore, will not be included in the RDP collection. In each book, the stories are relevant and of high interest to ESL students.

Having the ability to make connected utterances is crucial to ESL students. If a friend or co-worker asks them, "What did you do over the weekend?" or if the police ask, "What happened?" about an accident, the person must be able to respond with more than one sentence. Picture series are an excellent way to encourage this process. They can be used in a multi-level class where the lower level students can learn from the higher ones. The instructor or a student chooses a series to study. If wall charts are available, they should be hung in front of the class. If not, each student should have an individual copy of the whole picture series.

If the class is at the lower intermediate level, the instructor can begin with a warm-up activity. He or she will point to some of the noun items in the picture and ask students to call out the words, i.e. "a man, a briefcase, a lawyer, a hall, a woman, a window." The instructor will then say, "Look at picture one. This story happened last week." The past tense is stressed since it is often needed to tell a story.

The instructor should already have in mind a rough idea of how the story should progress. Anything the students call out is acceptable as long as it reflects comprehension of the story line. The instructor will focus on one student's version at a time, but will try to use ideas from everyone who participates. Students should not be forced to participate. They will probably be willing to speak at a later point in the exercise.

The lesson will proceed. For example, as someone calls out, "man talking," the instructor will put on the board two lines to represent the two words just suggested:

_____ _____

The student is asked to repeat. As he says "man" the instructor will point to the first line and likewise to the second line for "talking." Correction is handled in the following way: the instructor then will point to the men in the picture and ask, "How many?" A student will volunteer "Two." The instructor will indicate the "man" line again and someone will correct with "men." The next step will be to draw a line before the "men" line. The instructor will point to it and question with her face. Someone will supply,

"the." Next a line is drawn between the "men" and "talking" lines and is circled.

The student or class should now be reminded that this story happened last week. Someone will eventually call out "were." If the class contains all or some intermediate level students, the instructor can expand by further questions, such as "Where are they?" Eventually, "in the hallway" will be suggested (although the instructor may have to supply the noun if they do not know it). The utterance has now been expanded.

It can be expanded as much or as little as the instructor thinks the group or individual can handle. The primary point to be emphasized is that everything possible is elicited from the students. Structures that the instructor might not have thought the class could handle will emerge naturally (i.e. couldn't, didn't, had to, and so forth). And the structures will be comprehensible because they are based on the content of the pictures.

In a group situation, the members will supply the majority of the words, helping each other. They learn to rely more and more on each other and themselves and less and less on the instructor, thus becoming independent, which is a goal of ESL instruction.

When the first picture is finished, different students (the more advanced students first to let the less confident students hear it several times) are invited to "Tell me about picture one." The speaker will be relying on the picture and the lines the instructor has drawn. Nothing will have been written on the lines yet.

After various individuals have had a chance to describe picture one, they are asked to tell about picture two, and the same procedure is followed with the second picture. At this point, there are lines only; the line representing the past focus is circled by the teacher.

After most of the participants have achieved some fluency with picture two, they are asked to describe pictures one and two together. The same procedure is followed with picture three separately and then in sequence with the first two pictures. Finally, the fourth picture is learned, and the student or individuals in the class practice telling the entire story in sequence. This practice could be done in pairs as well as in a group setting. Learners would use the lines on the board and the pictures as cues. It is usually advisable to encourage the more advanced level learners to tell the story first, which gives the beginners or low intermediate level learners time to hear it and assimilate it.

The next step is to remove the lines, either by turning the board around

or by erasing them. At this time as at previous times, if the speaker falters, allow him or her a little time to think. If he or she cannot remember, others can supply the missing word or phrase. While perfection is not the goal, the exercise needs to be practiced until the past tense or other important grammatical points are included in the student's narration.

At each step, as the story increases in length, the students show a mixture of doubt in their ability and excitement at the challenge. They will be able to handle it because they have had adequate practice after each picture. And when they tell the whole story, their pleasure at their own achievement is evident and rewarding to the students as well as to the instructor.

If the lines were erased previously, students are asked to tell the story again while the instructor draws the lines again. The final step is to invite volunteers to go to the board and write by filling in the lines about each picture.

Three important goals are met with this technique.

1. The instructor speaks a minimal amount.
2. The students are provided maximum opportunity to speak.
3. The students depend more on each other for help in English and less on the teacher, which is, after all, like life outside of the classroom.

**What's the Story?** can also be used in a variety of other ways. The wall charts or large pictures can be used as a way of practicing speaking to introduce the reading in the students' books. The teacher or tutor can ask the students to look at the pictures and describe what they see either to the group or in pairs. This type of brainstorming encourages students to speak uninhibitedly and develops self-esteem. The students are participating as active contributors to the group. Depending on the level of the group or student, the instructor can make up different guide questions to reinforce and practice what has already been introduced in the class. With a high beginner or low intermediate level group or individual student, these guide questions may be "Tell me about_____." "What do you see?" "What are_____doing?" "Where are they?" With a higher level, the question can be "Tell me about _____." "What do you think they might be saying?" "What will happen next?" "What happened?" The pictures can be presented out of order and after looking at each one, the students can be asked to decide on the sequence of the pictures. Once the students have put the pictures in order, a student or several students can volunteer to tell the story in her or his own words.

Another means of promoting oral practice is to initiate free conversation. This can work well in a tutoring situation or class with intermediate or advanced students. Conversation may connect to a reading or come from the students' interests. Pay attention to what your students talk about to each other or to you before class, during break, or after class. These issues

can make the best topics for conversation in class. You can prepare conversation questions or have the students prepare them in pairs or groups.

Students can interview each other on certain topics and then report back to the whole group. It should be remembered that students will be more likely to participate if the topic interests them.

As students speak, correction should be offered judiciously. The goal is to build confidence; we do not want students to avoid speaking because they are afraid of making a mistake or being corrected. We need to budget our corrections. In particular, we should aim for those errors which are shared by many.

ESL authors have produced many conversation books. The task of making a good selection is consequently difficult. The RDP ESL consultants reviewed many conversation materials and found positive qualities in many of them. The books described below are recommended.

**Side by Side** (Books 1 and 2) is a popular series we highly recommend for providing grammar-based conversation practice in a structured medium. These books offer clear examples of conversations or short dialogues focusing on one grammar point at a time. Students look at illustrations which follow the conversations and respond by supplying the new structure from their understanding of the picture. The content is close to real-life situations. **Side by Side** can be used with groups or pairs and with beginning, intermediate, or advanced students.

**Expressways 1** is another suggested material for real-life conversation practice. A sequel to **Side by Side**, it can be used with high beginners or low intermediate students and is arranged by topics, such as social occasions, communication, transportation, housing, shopping, and employment. The guided conversations are followed by substitution exercises. Students create their own conversation at the end of each lesson. A highlight of **Expressways** is the range of characters presented in the dialogues. There are people of different ages, occupations, and ethnic groups.

**Expressways Foundations**, a more simplified version of **Expressways 1**, follows **Expressways 1** page-for-page. It can be used with beginning level students. **Foundations** presents model conversations of everyday situations followed by exercises.

## COPING SKILLS

Coping skills (also known as survival or life skills) are those practical things we all need to do in daily life. Most coping skills activities fit well into a competency-based curriculum, that is, a curriculum designed to help students with practical needs. The goal is usually to ac-

complish specific tasks (i.e., tell the doctor where it hurts, understand the business hours of a store by reading the sign) rather than to worry about correct grammar.

All four language skills—speaking, writing, listening, and reading—are required. It is important to be clear about what skill is needed for what situation. For example, if the tutor or teacher is teaching the class how to read the information on a bottle of prescription medicine, some pills or teaspoons should be ready for demonstration. The culmination of this lesson would be to have students read different labels and select the right number of pills and indicate the times to be taken by manipulating a clock or identifying a picture of a meal. Speaking is not the goal in the learning of this particular skill—reading is.

Some examples of necessary speaking skills are the following:

1. To state name, address, and other personal information
2. To describe a medical problem
3. To ask for directions
4. To ask the price of an unmarked item

Some examples of listening skills are as follows. These only require an appropriate physical response, not an oral one:

1. To give correct money when told a price
2. To follow directions given
3. To show understanding of time when spoken (i.e. point the hands on a cardboard clock to the time spoken by the instructor)

Some examples of reading skills are:

1. To understand signs on stores indicating business hours
2. To understand clothing and food labels
3. To look up a phone number
4. To understand a time schedule
5. To understand how to take prescribed or over-the-counter medicine

Some writing skills are as follows:

1. To fill out a form
2. To address an envelope
3. To fill out a money order or check
4. To write a short personal note

Most coping skills books contain dialogues and exercises. After the dialogues have been practiced, they can be conducted as role plays for lower level ESL students. There is such a variety of coping skills materials available that sections which teach the same subject, such as going to the doctor, can be extracted from different books and used to reinforce one topic.

We recommend the series **Lifelines** (Books 1 and 2) for the teaching of

coping skills. While there are four books in the **Lifelines** series, we are including only the first two, which will meet the needs of high beginners to low intermediates. The topics include transportation, food, restaurants, clothing, housing, and so forth.

The approach of the books is competency-based; that is, the students are taught useful phrases to accomplish specific tasks, such as asking someone for change or asking if this is the bus for Camden. Two games follow each even-numbered chapter. One is a game of "Concentration"; the other requires matching sentences with pictures. The games are designed to be photocopied and cut into pieces for playing.

**Survival English 1 and 2** (beginners to low intermediates) cover such coping skills as community resources (i.e. police, post office), filling out forms, health, and so forth. Each section has vocabulary and short dialogues followed either by pictures used for substitution drills or by written exercises. Book 1 is very basic.

## LISTENING

During the last few years, the teaching of listening skills has finally been getting the attention it deserves. Many ESL students have great difficulty understanding Americans in everyday situations. There are various ways to approach listening improvement. One way is to use a picture series which has been used previously for oral practice. After students have finished their oral lesson, the instructor can make some statements about the pictures using words already known to the students. The students will identify the number of the picture about which the instructor is speaking. The instructor might say, "The lawyer and his client were sitting in the courtroom." The students will say, "Number 3." They don't need to say any more than that; they need only indicate their comprehension.

When this kind of exercise becomes too easy, a few unknown words can be added into the sentence. In this case, students will use what they know as a context clue to understanding something new.

Another opportunity to teach listening can occur after a reading passage has been read aloud. The instructor makes statements and the students write "True" or "False" on their paper. This kind of activity can be used with all levels.

Performing tasks in response to listening activities is another way for students to demonstrate their understanding. For example, after the instructor has taught a lesson on giving directions, everyone is given a map. The students are told where to begin; then directions are given to see if they can get to the intended destination.

Another aspect of listening is related to the pronunciation of natural American English. When students find out about sound reductions (i.e., "to" becomes "ta"), omitted sounds (i.e., "Give 'im the book"), elisions (i.e., "Don't you" becomes "Doncha"), they are very surprised and begin to comprehend why it is so difficult for them to understand Americans.

The book **Whaddaya Say?** covers these kinds of spoken forms. It is very important that ESL students have the opportunity to learn how most Americans speak in everyday situations. **Whaddaya Say?** combines teaching the pronunciation of 22 commonly used reductions ("wanna", "gonna", "whaddaya" and more) and listening. Each unit presents the reductions for students to listen to and repeat. The instructor can model the example or students can listen to the tape and repeat. A dialogue follows using examples of reduced forms. Each dialogue has examples of the forms in context. Students listen to the dialogue two or three times and fill in the missing words or phrases. Again, the dialogue can be read by the instructor or played on the tape. **Whaddaya Say?** can be used with low intermediate or intermediate students.

Listening activities can be worked into grammar lessons, also. After several tenses have been taught (i.e., past, present, and present progressive) a hand gesture is assigned to each tense. For example, a thumb over the shoulder will indicate past; a hand moving from side to side in front of the person will indicate the repeated activity of the present tense; and a forefinger pointing straight down in front will indicate the "now" meaning of the present progressive tense.

The instructor will prepare a list of statements and questions using the three tenses randomly. After each one is said, the students indicate with hand signals which tense they understood.

There are often misunderstandings between native English speakers and limited English speakers about time, as expressed by tenses. The following scenario could easily occur at work. The supervisor demands to know, "Why did you change that? I told you before that we already changed it!"

The /d/ sound of "ed" in "changed" is a very subtle one and difficult to hear; therefore, it must be taught. Likewise, the other two sounds of "ed" (/t/ and /əd/) must be taught. Then the drill with the gestures explained previously can be used as described below.

Explain that the difference between the present tense and past tense is very important. The former usually indicates a repeated action and the latter indicates a completed one. The sound indicating this difference, however, is difficult for ESL students to distinguish. The tutor or teacher will say base forms (infinitives) and their regular past tense forms (ending in "ed") randomly. The listeners will indicate their comprehension with the appropriate present or past gesture.

The aforementioned activity is the same as a discrimination drill which will be described in the Pronunciation section. In the latter section the numbers 1 and 2 are used instead of gestures. Here, however, the goal is to understand the tense the speaker is using, whereas, in the Pronunciation section, the goal is to help improve the student's pronunciation by first assuring that she or he can distinguish the sounds aurally.

Total Physical Response (TPR) is a whole method of teaching English (or any language) based solely on providing a long initial phase of listening. The instructor gives commands (politely, of course) like "Stand up, sit down, go to the door". This method is based on the theory that people learn a second language in a similar fashion to the way they learned their first language as babies. For the first few years, babies listen to those around them and observe their actions. They seem very passive, but really they are taking everything in and processing all of the input. After a period of processing, the babies begin to speak.

We also recommend **Before Book One, From the Start** and **Listen to Me!** as good listening books with useful exercises.

**Before Book One,** designed for beginners and low literacy students, supports the idea that developing listening comprehension skills is necessary before developing oral skills. This book can be used with students who have heard little or no English. The exercises focus on having students demonstrate their comprehension of numbers, times, clothing, and body parts. Students exhibit other comprehension through non-verbal responses.

**From the Start** is for beginners. Each word or phrase is represented by a photo in the text. Useful language is presented including numbers in the context of money and phone numbers and also arrival times and gate numbers at an airport. The introduction clearly explains the format of the book.

**Listen to Me!**, for high beginners, offers excellent listening comprehension practice within a real context. Units are well organized around a narrative. A full page illustration appears before each unit to introduce the theme. This book provides adult topics for beginners while using limited vocabulary and basic structures. The narratives are written in the back of the text so they can be read if the tape is not available.

## READING

The goals of conducting reading activities in the ESL class are:

1. To improve comprehension
2. To show new readers and remind those who read in their own language that they can derive enjoyment from reading in English

3. To demonstrate how reading can help students meet daily needs like reading store signs, medicine labels, and other practical information.

Most of the books we recommend help achieve the first goal. They include excellent suggestions to the instructor. They also have exercises to help develop comprehension skills. They provide pre-reading warm-up activities. These kinds of exercises stimulate the reader to focus on what he or she already knows about the forthcoming subject and to relate the information to his or her personal life, if possible. For example, if the subject is going to be the relationship of a mother and her teenage children, the instructor might start off by asking:

1. Who has teenage children?
2. What are some of their problems?
3. When you were a teenager, how did you act toward your parents?

Such pre-reading activities are so important that instructors should prepare them for any materials which do not provide them. If there is a picture preceding the reading, students can be asked to describe what they see. The picture can give clues to help readers predict the content of the reading. Such pre-reading activities improve reading comprehension.

Most of the books we recommend contain guide or preview questions which help the reader predict what the reading will be about. To test comprehension, there are true and false questions about the factual content, and there are inference questions to develop this skill of reading between the lines.

There are also other kinds of comprehension questions. Some ESL books which we did not recommend use only inversions of statements that appear in the reading passages. The students are instructed to answer in complete statements, and the resulting responses are stilted. For example, a question might ask, "Does the woman have three children?" The expected answer is, "Yes, the woman has three children." Instructors are encouraged to use a variety of materials to teach reading comprehension, rewriting exercises where necessary so that they are as useful as those in the recommended books.

The following are examples of good questions for getting students to demonstrate their comprehension using natural language. For example: "Tell me about the landlady." This appropriately requires an answer in a complete sentence. The student could answer: "She lives with a friend. Her husband is dead. She has no children." The exercises also present "or" questions which usually require a complete sentence answer also. For example: "Does she live alone or with someone?" "She lives with a friend."

Instructors would be well-advised to use these kinds of questions when preparing comprehension questions for other reading materials because the

answers they require indicate whether a student really comprehends a reading passage or has merely learned to parrot the words.

In addition, in the recommended books important vocabulary words and idioms or expressions are highlighted and exercises are provided to reinforce their retention. Students should be encouraged to use context clues before resorting to a bilingual dictionary or asking the instructor.

Finally, the recommended books include interesting oral and written discussion questions. This integration of oral and written activities into reading lessons will keep the lessons lively and will enhance comprehension. If the reading books being used do not have such an integration the instructor can use the reading as a springboard for discussion, writing, or listening activities of his or her own devising. Such exercises are not sidetracks; they are means by which we add to the students' knowledge and understanding.

There are many interesting reading books currently being published for ESL students. Only a few are recommended here. We have had direct experience with some of these books and know that the content engages students' interest very successfully. By choosing high interest adult materials, we help achieve the second goal of reading activities for ESL students—that of allowing our students the chance to enjoy reading English.

**No Hot Water Tonight** (for high beginners to low intermediates), for example, has characters and situations to which most adults can relate. Students from countries thousands of miles apart have recognized the "Mrs. Gold" character—the good-hearted older woman who watches the street from her window and knows what everybody is doing and when. Everyone can relate to the problems of a single working mother trying to handle a resentful, rebellious teenage son. The chapters dealing with renting an apartment and getting repairs made are of universal interest. The chapter about the young single working women who go to a singles' bar is another favorite and gives students a slice of real urban American life.

**Good Days and Bad Days** (for high beginners to intermediates) deals with personal feelings in situations common to all newcomers—taking the wrong bus and getting lost, using English on the telephone for the first time, experiencing frustration in the ESL class. After using this book, the instructor will notice a deeper rapport with students resulting from the process of admitting that we all—tutors, teachers, and students alike—have similar feelings whether we express them or not.

**True Stories in the News** is another highly recommended selection (high beginners to low intermediates). It contains short and amusing readings of human interest. Each story is preceded by a clear black and white photograph accompanied by pre-reading discussion questions. There are other excellent exercises for vocabulary expansion, comprehension, discussion and writing. These stories, adapted from magazines or newspapers, provide enjoyable

readings for adult students.

**Spaghetti, Again?** (high beginners to low intermediates) is set in a small Pennsylvania town. The story depicts the ups and downs of a widow coping with her loss, her own goals, and trying to raise three good-natured, sometimes quarrelsome teenagers. Pre-reading exercises enhance the students' familiarity with the themes about which they will be reading. There are also comprehension and vocabulary activities.

For adults who cannot read at all in English and/or their native language, we recommend the use of the series **Entry to English, Books 1-4**. The Teacher's Guides for each level are necessary; they include instructions for presenting the material. The format of each book is very simple, uncluttered, and easy to follow. The series begins with learning numbers and printing the alphabet. It then progresses to pre-literacy skills followed by phonics exercises. There are also coping skills presented at a very basic level. These skills include understanding the calendar; telling time; filling out a form; and understanding prescription labels, doctors' appointment cards, and the names of various jobs.

The third goal, mentioned earlier, of helping students read to meet daily needs is met in part by the coping skills content in **No Hot Water Tonight**. This book includes chapters on hunting for an apartment, renting an apartment, asking the landlord to make repairs, buying on the installment plan, being admitted to the hospital and other topics. The coping skills books, which are recommended in the Coping Skills section, help meet the other practical reading needs of ESL students, such as understanding signs, labels, and schedules.

## PRONUNCIATION

Many ESL students have a need to improve their pronunciation. It can be a very serious problem for some. There are countries, such as India and the West Indies where much of the population speaks English but with an accent different from an American accent. When people move to the United States from these countries, they are sometimes unsuccessful at obtaining jobs which deal with the public, such as secretarial positions, because of their accents.

Regardless of their native country, many people with high level skills like doctors and psychiatrists often do obtain employment. However, they frequently come under criticism from patients who claim they cannot understand the doctor because of the accent. In universities, teaching assistants from other countries have received complaints from students and even negative publicity in the newspapers for the same problem of unclear pronunciation.

For those people just learning English as a Second Language, achieving clear pronunciation is one more hurdle added to understanding, grammar, vocabulary, idioms, word order, and fluency.

Pronunciation can be taught specifically as a whole lesson or as the need arises. In regard to teaching whole lessons we recommend the book **Speak Up**. It would be appropriate for students around the high beginner to low intermediate level. It contains both pronunciation and listening activities.

The pronunciation activities in **Speak Up** deal with consonant and vowel sounds, stress, intonation, and reduction of sounds. The last three items are explained in more detail below. The listening activities involve the students in answering several multiple choice comprehension questions after listening to conversations on the tape (or read by the instructor from the tapescript).

Pronunciation lessons can be taught on the spur of the moment also. It is better to wait until a pronunciation problem arises spontaneously. If a brief interruption of five minutes or so would not disrupt the flow of the lesson, then the instructor can stop and do a short pronunciation lesson.

To help instructors design effective lessons, we offer the following principles and suggestions. Before someone can pronounce a sound correctly, he or she must be able to hear it. ESL students will often pronounce two different words the same way. When it is called to their attention, they say, "I can't hear the difference!" If students hear the difference, their chances of pronouncing words correctly are improved. In addition, their understanding of American speech will be enhanced.

The following is an illustration. The students are trying to say "might," but it comes out sounding more like "mate." And since several students are having the same problem, it is a good time to stop. The main problem is with the vowel sound in the middle. The instructor will put the following on the board (or paper) and do a *discrimination drill*. A discrimination drill is used for a word or sound being pronounced in such a way that it sounds like another word or sound.

| 1 | 2 |
|---|---|
| might | mate |

The instructor will say, "I will talk. You will only listen. Don't talk. If you hear 'might' show me one finger. If you hear 'mate', show me two fingers. Before I begin, listen. (The instructor points to #1 and models it for them and then does the same with #2.) Now we'll begin."

Then the exercise proceeds. The instructor calls out one word or the other at random, and the students will put up one or two fingers. They should be discouraged from calling out the number. The use of fingers gives the instructor the best chance to see which people are having the most trouble

hearing the sounds. The instructor can see if people are just looking around and copying the others. If the exercise is kept light and fun, the participants will be willing to risk making a mistake. If the trouble persists, the instructor can pronounce the words clearly again and repeat the drill.

The two words being used are called minimal pairs. Only one sound is different between them. Other minimal pairs can be employed but (in this case) the two middle vowel sounds must be kept the same, for example:

Mike—make
sight—sate
fight—fate
mile—male

The same kind of discrimination drill is conducted with the other pairs. The instructor should not get diverted into explaining the meanings of the words. If someone asks and it is easy to explain, the instructor can go ahead, but it is better to say, "Don't worry about the meanings. Just think about the sounds now."

Minimal pairs can be done with short sentences, too. For example, in natural speech, the "h" of "he" is dropped in the question, "What's he doing?" The "s" is elided (combined with) the remaining "e" sound. Some students can't distinguish the differences between that question and "What's she doing?" The two sentences can be written on the board in the same way as the other minimal pairs. The tutor or teacher will explain about the elision and omitted "h" sound and will proceed with the discrimination drill.

| 1 | 2 |
|---|---|
| What's he doing? | What's she doing? |

The other aspects of pronunciation that an instructor should be concerned with are stress, intonation, reductions and the aforementioned elisions.

During any oral lesson, the instructor will come upon one or more sentences over which students are stumbling. One is chosen and written on the board. For example:

He went to the other bank.

The student or class is asked, "Which words get the stress?" The first time, they may not understand what is meant. The instructor will add, "Which words do we say strongly?" ("Strongly" is emphasized with a strong hand gesture. After this kind of exercise is practiced a few times, they will know just what to do.)

Different people will begin to guess. The instructor puts a stress mark on the words as they get it right. It is surprising how often they do get it right.

He wént to the óther bánk.

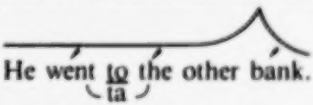
Then the instructor will call attention to the fact that the words that do not get stressed are usually reduced in sound. In other words, the sounds get smaller. For example, "to" becomes "ta."

He went to the other bank.
ta

Next, the class is asked if native speakers slide any words together. (A gesture is made of joining the fingertips of the two forefingers together). This is an elision, although the students do not need to learn the technical word. As the students call out where the elisions are, the instructor marks them on the sentence.

He went to the other bank.
ta

Finally, the instructor asks, "What is the intonation of your voice? The first few times she or he can add, "Do we go up or down?...Where?" If nobody knows, the instructor will indicate with a line, the upward and/or downward intonation:



He went to the other bank.
ta

The class should be told that generally the intonation goes up at the end of Yes/No questions and down at the end of statements, "wh" questions (what, where, when, and so forth) and "or" questions, i.e., "Do you want coffee or tea?"

If this kind of exercise is done regularly, the students will become very good at learning the tricks of English pronunciation. It is always better to try to draw the answers out of them if possible. They will be heard mumbling the sentence to themselves and that is the goal. They are trying to monitor their own pronunciation and to figure out how it should sound. The exercise is finished by saying the sentence normally and letting them repeat it.

This technique should be practiced at home until the tutor or teacher is comfortable. Native speakers of English do these things correctly without thinking. It is just a matter of consciously focusing in this new way.

We recommend **Whaddaya Say?** as the text which can be used to teach some of these skills. It reveals the mysteries of "Whaddaya (What do you...) "D'ya" (Do you...) "gonna" (going to - future) "wanna" (want to) "haf ta" (have to) "give'im" (give him) and so forth. It is important to note that it is not imperative that students say "gonna" and "wanna." If they choose to, that is fine. But it is essential that they understand these forms when they hear them.

Some instructors may worry that they are teaching incorrect English. In fact, they are teaching natural English used by even the most educated Americans in all but perhaps the most formal situations. If there are still doubts, the tutor or teacher should monitor herself and a friend when talking. Unless they are unique, they both speak with these same reductions, elisions, and omissions.

To increase fluency, there is a technique called a *backward build-up.* After

going through the aforementioned steps, the instructor will say the last word of the sentence and gesture for the class to repeat as outlined below:

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | bank. | (They repeat.) | |
| Now model: | | | | | | | |
| | | | | other | bank. | ( " | " ) |
| Next: | | | | | | | |
| | | | the | other | bank. | ( " | " ) |
| Continue step by step: | | | | | | | |
| | | to | the | other | bank. | ( " | " ) |
| | went | to | the | other | bank. | ( " | " ) |
| He | went | to | the | other | bank. | ( " | " ) |

Doing the sentence backwards helps keep the stress and intonation correct. The process is repeated a few times until the speakers are saying it smoothly. This technique can be used on any sentence with which students are having trouble. It might be useful, for example, in helping students pronounce a difficult sentence in a dialogue.

## WRITING

Many instructors have questions about the place of writing in the adult ESL class. They wonder if writing should be a priority and what kind of writing should be taught. One way to find out is to ask students in what situations they need to be able to write.

We have divided writing into two categories:

1. Some people will have practical writing needs, such as the ability to fill out forms.
2. Some people will need to be able to compose. These compositions could vary from short personal notes (i.e. a thank you note or an explanation of absence to the ESL teacher or a child's teacher) to essays, research papers, and reports in academic situations or white collar jobs.

Practical writing needs, such as filling out forms, addressing an envelope and filling out a check or money order can be met by using coping skills books (see the section on Coping Skills). An instructor can also develop specific lessons to meet the stated needs of his or her students.

In regard to composition, we offer the following considerations and recommendations of materials. Many ESL books include written exercises. These are very helpful to students who remember things better when they write them. Exercises also provide material for home study and review. However, writing exercises should not be confused with compositions.

Some books are called composition books (i.e., controlled composition) but they deal mainly with grammar, which is only one aspect of writing. Other writing books emphasize sentence combining and other manipula-

tions of sentences or phrases. These may be helpful to some students, but if the goal is to teach real composition, then materials will be needed which deal with organization, topic sentences, paragraph writing, supporting detail, different styles of writing such as comparing and contrasting, and so forth.

**Idea Exchange I**, for high beginners and low intermediate students, presents 10 units of pre-writing, pre-reading activities, illustrated readings written by students, exercises, writing instructions, and post-writing activities. Students learn to do journal writing. They use personal topics as subjects for their compositions. Pair work is strongly encouraged.

If class time is limited, then writing is probably a lower priority than speaking, listening, and reading. However, the following are some suggestions for generating writing activities. The Language Experience Approach has been described in the ESL Literacy section. To use this approach the student or class dictates a story, perhaps about a recent class activity or other event, and the instructor transcribes it. For beginners, the teacher does not correct. However, as the members of a low intermediate class dictate and leave out a word the instructor will put a line where the missing word would go in the sentence and ask what should go there. This is a particularly good activity for low intermediates.

Some instructors encourage their students to keep a daily journal. Practitioners vary in the amount of correction they do. The main goal is to overcome writing blocks and get people writing. In their journals, the students should write from 5 to 15 minutes and not worry about correctness. The goal is to get the ideas and words flowing. They can write about anything, and their confidentiality should be respected.

Students can write from the information on a grid or matrix they have been using in class. These activities are explained in the Conversation and Grammar sections. Likewise, if reading material has produced some interesting discussion, learners could be asked to write about the issue. They can do the writing in class, but it is preferable to have them write at home. Class time can be devoted to areas where a teacher's immediate input is needed.

There are many ways to handle correction. Some practitioners use symbols in the margin representing the kinds of errors—for example, subject and verb agreement, spelling, or verb tense. Others believe it is better to focus on one or two major recurring errors rather than to overwhelm students with the quantity of errors that will inevitably be there.

## IDIOMS

Idioms (including two or three word verbs) present one of the last stumbling blocks to getting the hang of English. Some students may be catching on to grammar while others are thrown for a loop. They may be

getting a handle on pronunciation. New vocabulary may be sinking in, but if the students do not get idioms, they may get on their teacher's nerves and the latter may blow her stack.

Native or near-native speakers of English had no difficulty understanding the previous paragraph. The aforementioned idioms and hundreds more are taken for granted. They are used in everyday speech and newspapers. But ESL students feel very perplexed by them initially.

After some months of sorting out the basics of English, lower intermediate students can begin to profit from studying idioms. Naturally, the more advanced level students can integrate idioms more easily into their prior knowledge.

Idioms are ways of saying things which can always be said without an idiom. For example, we can say, "He got the hang of it." But we could just as well have said, "He understood it." So while our students can say the latter, it will take them a long time to be able to say the former—the idiom. Indeed, some people never develop the confidence to use idioms orally.

There are many idiom books available, some organized in unique ways, but all offering much the same format. There is a dialogue containing the target idioms followed by various written exercises. These exercises should be done orally as well as in writing.

The majority of idiom books neglect teaching the skill of being able to understand spoken idioms. Tutors and teachers will therefore need to develop their own exercises. For example the teacher can assign a simple word as a synonym to each idiom being studied (i.e. get the hang of something-understand). The pairs are written on the board. The instructor will make up some sentences using the idioms, and will say them out loud. The student will write the synonym to demonstrate comprehension.

We recommend **Idioms in American Life** for low to high intermediate students. Of the many books reviewed, it has the clearest format and best choice of idioms. The content is up-to-date. Each lesson has a dialogue using the idioms. There are fill-in-the-blanks, definitions, and personalized question and answer exercises. **Essential Idioms in English**, already in the RDP collection, is appropriate for the higher intermediate to advanced levels.

## GRAMMAR

There are conflicting views about the value of teaching grammar. Some practitioners believe it is an orderly way to learn a language. It is hoped that once the learner has been armed with the rules of a language, he or she will be able to apply these rules to new situations.

Other experts in the field urge ESL instructors to eliminate or at least place less emphasis on grammar. Practitioners are urged to use the more accepted approaches, such as those which expose the students to heavy doses of listening (Total Physical Response) or require the student to master various functions, for example, apologizing and asking for clarification (the functional-notional approach).

But many ESL students, especially those who have previously studied English in traditional classes, request grammar. When this happens a portion of class time can be used for teaching grammar rules and the pages of written exercises can be assigned for homework.

During class time, the other skills can be taught with a grammar focus. The matrix and grid exercises described in the section on Conversation can be used to teach one structure at a time. Two of the books recommended in that section, **Side by Side** and **Expressways**, are grammar-based. The instructor may wish to draw attention to the grammar taught in these books by explaining the rules on a more conscious level, because the teaching of grammar in these books is very subtle. Many students fail to grasp the further applicability of the grammar presented so this, too, could be emphasized by the teacher. The Conversation section of this guide also demonstrates how **What's the Story?** can be used to emphasize the past tense and other structures.

In the Listening section, we suggested using a discrimination drill between the base form and "ed" past tense endings of regular verbs. In this way, the students can aurally distinguish between the present and past tense.

| 1 | 2 |
|---|---|
| learn | learned |
| 1 | 2 |
| kiss | kissed |

Additionally, it could be useful to practice with minimal pair sentences where only the verb is different.

| 1 | 2 |
|---|---|
| I learn English. | I learned English. |
| 1 | 2 |
| I kiss him. | I kissed him. |

A discrimination drill could be designed around the future tense with "going to."

| 1 | 2 |
|---|---|
| I'm going to school. | I'm going to go to school. |

| 1 | 2 |
|---|---|
| I'm going to a restaurant. | I'm going to eat. |

Another example of a listening activity based on grammar could be done on the future tense with "will." The contracted form is difficult for ESL students to hear. It can be contrasted with the base form which indicates the present tense. Two examples follow:

| 1 | 2 |
|---|---|
| I'll go there. | I go there. |

| 1 | 2 |
|---|---|
| I'll see her. | I see her. |

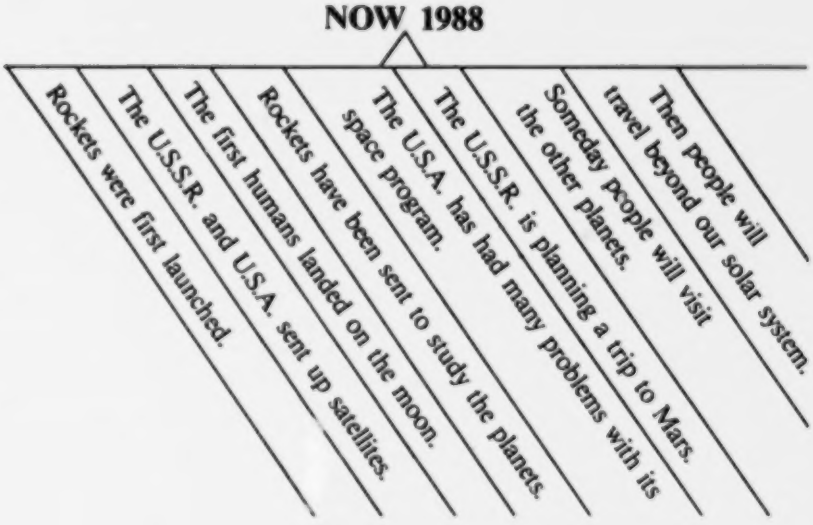
Writing assignments can be designed around various grammar points. For example, after students have practiced describing a picture series in the past tense (as outlined in the Conversation section) the instructor can ask the class or individual to write the story. Also in the Conversation section, we described the use of a grid to guide the oral production of a particular tense or other grammar point. In that example, the students are practicing the present tense with the verb "have" and are telling what they have or don't have in their wallets. After they have had adequate time to practice orally, the teacher can direct the students to write a paragraph about the contents of her or his own wallet and those of a classmate. Maria's paragraph might look like this: "In my wallet I have a photo of my family, and I have a driver's license; I don't have a work ID card, and I don't have a library card. Thanh has a photo of his wife, and he has a work ID card. He doesn't have a library card, and he doesn't have a driver's license."

Controlled composition texts or assignments can also be used to combine writing and grammar. First, a reading is presented. Then the student is instructed to change the gender or number of the characters or to change the tense or to make various other changes. By changing the gender of the main character, for example, other changes in subject, object, and possessive pronouns must also be made accordingly. The following is an example: "Mr. Abbott went to the school at 3:30 to pick up his son and daughter. He got there early so that he could see them when they came out."

Instruction to the student: Change Mr. Abbott to Mrs. Abbott. The student will write: "Mrs. Abbott went to the school at 3:30 to pick up her son and daughter. She got there early so that she could see them when they came out."

Reading exercises can be designed around a specific grammar point. Students can be instructed to read a passage and identify and list all of the object pronouns or comparatives or past tense verbs (regular and irregular) or future tense and so forth.

A *time line activity* can be used when a reading passage is appropriate. The practitioner prepares a time line (as shown in the example which follows) and draws a number of diagonal lines to match the number of events selected for the activity. "Now" is indicated in the appropriate place. This sheet is then copied and distributed to the class members. The events to be used will also be listed although not in chronological order. The students are then instructed to write the events on the diagonal lines in the correct chronological sequence according to the passage. Their ability to do this activity will depend on their firm grasp of the various tenses used. For example, the sentences with "will" must be placed to the right of the "now" point.


NOW 1988
Rockets were first launched.
The U.S.S.R. and U.S.A. sent up satellites.
The first humans landed on the moon.
Rockets have been sent to study the planets.
The U.S.A. has had many problems with its space program.
The U.S.S.R. is planning a trip to Mars.
Someday people will visit the other planets.
Then people will travel beyond our solar system.

In the area of grammar we are recommending Books 1, 2 and 3 of the series, **Grammarwork,** which actually consists of 4 levels. The first 3 can be used with beginners through advanced students. We like the clear and concise format. Each page gives a short grammatical explanation followed by oral and written practice. There is another section included in each unit, "Make It Work", which applies the grammatical forms to a more personalized situation. For example, after an exercise using the past tense, students are asked a series of questions about their first job. This book allows for group, pair, or individual instruction. Exercises can be taught in order or as needed. Answers are given in the appendix. **Grammarwork** goes well with other series, such as **Side by Side** or **Lifelines**.

# PRE-VOCATIONAL

In the past, pre-vocational texts usually concentrated on how to get a job — reading want ads, using an employment agency, and having a job interview. While these skills may still be useful to teach to students, recent research indicates that many ESL students get jobs through their network of friends. Perhaps for this reason, the more recent pre-vocational materials concentrate on the language skills needed for keeping a job and for obtaining promotions.

These language skills are often called "language functions." Some examples are: asking for clarification when someone has said something, asking for help, getting someone to explain an error, apologizing, and making small talk. These language functions cut across all jobs — white collar and blue collar.

Teaching language functions is an example of a communicative competence approach. The focus is not on grammar. Rather it is on whether the workers can get their supervisors to clarify the instructions so the workers can successfully complete their work (communicative competence). The alternative is that they shyly, silently do what they *think* the supervisor may have said. This often results in criticism, anger from the boss, or even getting fired.

It is our recommendation that pre-vocational ESL students also receive a well-rounded general ESL program; otherwise, learning the language functions would be like trying to memorize a phrase book. For this reason, most pre-vocational ESL books are aimed at those students who are above the beginning levels.

Many language functions are culture bound. The American supervisor would much prefer that the worker ask for clarification rather than waste time doing a job incorrectly and have to do it again. But in the student's country this might not be the appropriate thing to do, or the person may simply feel shy about speaking English. ESL students must be helped to understand these cultural facts as they apply to language functions.

In addition, learners need to know how to socialize comfortably with their co-workers. They need to learn how to talk about the weather and inquire about a co-worker's family or weekend activities. These are also culturally bound language functions.

People from other countries, moreover, need information about workplace safety, unions, company policies, and discrimination or other unfair labor practices.

One book we recommend is **Speaking Up at Work.** Its format is very clear and it is easy to follow. This low intermediate to intermediate book teaches pre-vocational language functions and information needed on any

job, such as calling in sick, offering help, getting work checked, safety, and benefits. There are many exercises moving from controlled responses to role plays using natural language.

Another recommended book is **ESL for Action — Problem Posing at Work.** Besides describing language functions, it contains information on such topics as immigration and workers' rights, and provides opportunities for learners to relate to issues personally as a step toward making change. These activities are based on theories of Paolo Freire, the famous Brazilian educator.

## CITIZENSHIP

Often, there are people in an ESL class who want to prepare for the United States citizenship examination. Some of these people may have a genuine interest in understanding American history and the workings of the American governmental system. They are also under pressure to "pass the test."

**A Handbook for Citizenship** is a very practical, goal-oriented book to help people pass the citizenship examination. The text includes thirty of the most frequently asked questions as well as pertinent descriptions of government. There are exercises after each unit.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service examiner asks the applicants questions which must be answered orally. The applicants are asked to write only a sentence or two in simple English. Most of the practice, therefore, should focus on understanding and answering the questions.

Students who are interested in a more thorough knowledge of United States history and government may be given any of the selection of books on these subjects in the RDP collection. It is also recommended that all ESL students, as they become U.S. citizens, be encouraged to vote and be given information about voting registration and procedures.

## TESTING

Testing can be used for placement, diagnosis, and progress. If an ESL program has many classes and levels, then it is important to make sure that the placement testing is done consistently. For example, if different people administer a test, they should administer and grade it by the same standards. Testing should, ideally, be done by someone who knows English well and knows what constitutes an acceptable answer.

The placement test should also be short so the student is not frightened away. Also, if a person is having trouble with the test he or she should not be forced to complete it. The experienced tester will probably be able to tell where such a student should be placed.

Placement tests should reflect the curriculum for the planned class. For example, if the class emphasizes conversation, then an oral test should be administered, not a written one.

An oral placement test which uses pictures and has the person tell a story in the past, in connected sequence, is usually very revealing of what that person can already say. For example, experienced testers listen for connectors, such as "After that...", and the use of the past tense or lack of it. Good placement testing will make the classes more satisfying for the students and tutors or teachers.

Tests used for diagnosis help to identify what the student already knows and what he or she needs to study. A wide variety of tests are available to diagnose student needs, but in general, it is preferable to avoid standardized tests and use, instead, informal measures of student needs.

When a test is used to measure progress, it is important that the test reflect what has actually been covered in class. Tests should not be given too often. The students can correct their own tests as the instructor gives the answers. The latter can walk around and look at their results. This may help eliminate the feeling of pressure and competition.

We would urge programs to use a minimum of progress testing. For adults who have had negative schooling experiences as children, tests conjure up bad memories. Listening, reading, writing and even oral activities in class will give the instructor many opportunities to monitor a student's progress. Therefore, unless a program requires giving a grade or keeping strict records, testing should be kept at a minimum.

## ACTIVITIES

Activities are games or exercises used to change the pace of classroom or tutorial study. They should be fun and different from the usual routine. They are not used for teaching new skills; rather, they are for practice and reinforcement of previous work.

For good ideas for activities, we recommend **Games and Butterflies.** It organizes activities by language skills — listening, speaking, and so forth. Any of the numerous activities can be adapted to reflect the need of a tutoring session or class at a particular time. Tenses can be changed, for example, or activities made easier or more difficult. If time is a problem, students can be enlisted to help do the work involved in preparing a game.

These activities are a good way to review a lesson. They should be done in the spirit of fun. Many students really enjoy them. Their involvement and enjoyment are obvious. Fun, not competition, should be the aim of activities.

One suggestion for a beginner's class is the card game "Concentration". Using index cards, stick figures are drawn on each card representing the present progressive tense; there are 2 identical cards for each action. Each student turns over 2 cards and describes them, for example, "He's cooking. He's running... Different!" The next player turns over two cards trying to find two which are the same.

Another suggestion is a form of bingo called "Verb-o" because the cards (enough for one for each player) are covered with irregular past tenses and base forms (infinitives) of verbs.

Once instructors have had some experience with activities, they and their students may want to invent their own games.

## VOCABULARY

Some practitioners recommend that little time should be spent on teaching noun vocabulary. Students can do that on their own in many ways. For example, they can use a bilingual dictionary, ask a friend, and so forth. Students need the instructor and class time for the more difficult things — for example, verb tenses and listening exercises.

Other practitioners teach a lot of vocabulary, especially to beginners, in the context of structures or coping skills. They teach, for example, the parts of the body in the context of a structure like "My leg hurts." During the practice, other parts of the body will be substituted for "leg." It is important to make the meaning of vocabulary clear with pictures or realia (real things) when vocabulary is taught in a class or tutoring session. Most practitioners agree that the teaching of lists of vocabulary words should be avoided.

When teaching a picture series, the instructor supplies new vocabulary (nouns, verbs, and other parts of speech) as they are needed. It has been found that people remember best the words which they need to know.

# CONCLUSION

We have presented a description of approaches and methods of teaching ESL, suggestions for creating a comfortable atmosphere for students, and ways of identifying and working with ESL literacy students. We have also included a description of recommended materials and specific ways in which they may be used in a classroom or tutoring situation. We hope this guide will help you in your specific teaching situation and give you encouragement to build a supportive learning environment for you and your students.

# APPENDIX 1

## READER DEVELOPMENT COLLECTION

The Reader Development Program of the Free Library of Philadelphia provides materials written on the eighth grade level or below to individuals and organizations in Philadelphia that are teaching basic reading skills and ESL skills to adults. The materials are primarily in paperback and are provided on a consumable basis for use with out-of-school adults and young adults who are 14 years of age or older. Workbook materials may be written in by the student. Materials are provided in quantity to non-profit organizations doing Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English as a Second Language training. In order to receive free materials, eligible borrowers must be Philadelphia residents or individuals paying Philadelphia taxes.

The opportunity to see the collection of recommended ABE and ESL materials (over 500 items) is available to adult educators and ESL specialists from any location. Interested individuals may call the Reader Development Program for an appointment to inspect and evaluate the RDP Demonstration Collection.

The grid in Appendix 2 displays the ESL books we have recommended for inclusion in the Reader Development Program Collection. The books recommended as a result of this project are in **bold print**. The intersection of the skill area and level should be consulted to find appropriate materials for ESL students.

RDP purchases multiple copies of all recommended materials. Based on the level of funding, these books will be available to eligible individuals and programs in Philadelphia. Local programs should call the Reader Development Program to check on the availability of materials and to make an appointment to see the materials.

Some ESL materials have accompanying tapes. The Reader Development

Program regrets that it cannot provide these tapes due to financial constraints, but interested individuals and programs may purchase tapes from the publishers. Materials in this curriculum guide can all be used without tapes. Some include a tapescript which tutors or teachers can use to do the speaking themselves.

Instructors choosing new books for their students should keep the following information in mind. In our choices of materials, we purposely did not select many advanced level books because ESL programs served by RDP do not teach many students at the advanced level.

We urge those who are choosing materials to be aware of another issue concerning the level of a book. Practitioners who know their students (or have a clear idea of the level of new students) should examine books carefully with the students in mind. Instructors should imagine how they would present some of the lessons and whether the lessons would be appropriate for their students.

It is important not to be misled by the level claimed by the book itself. The authors' ideas of a particular level might be quite different from the same level in the tutors' or teachers' programs.

# APPENDIX 2

## GRID OF ESL MATERIALS*

| Category | Beginner (illiterate) | Beginner (literate) | High Beginner | Low Intermediate | Intermediate | Advanced |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CONVERSATION | | **Expressways Foundations** Side by Side Bk. 1 → | | Bk. 2 → | | |
| | | | **Expressways Bk. 1** → | | | |
| | | | A Conversation Book 1 → | | | |
| | | | | **What's the Story?** Bk.1 → | Bk. 2 → | Bk. 3 → |
| COPING SKILLS | | **Survival English** Bk. 1 → | Bk. 2 → | | **The Immigrant Experience** | |
| | | | **Lifelines** Bk. 1 → | Bk. 2 → | | |
| | | | Emergency English Workbook & Tutor's Handbook | Looking at American Signs | | |
| LISTENING | **Before Book One** → | | | | | |
| | | From the Start → | | **Whaddaya Say?** → | | |
| | | | **Listen to Me!** → | | | |
| READING | **Entry to English** Bks. 1-4 → | | No Hot Water Tonight → | | | |
| | | | **Spaghetti, Again?** → | | | |
| | | | | **Good Days and Bad Days** → | | |
| | Laubach Way to English ESOL → | | | True Stories in the News | | |
| PRONUNCIATION | | | | **Speak Up** → | | |
| WRITING | Handwriting Workbook: Manuscript (printing) | | | **Idea Exchange** | | |
| | Improving Your Handwriting (cursive) | | | | | |
| IDIOMS | | | | **Idioms in American Life** → | | |
| | | | | | Essential Idioms in English | |
| GRAMMAR | | | **Grammarwork** Bk. 1 → | Bk. 2 → | Bk. 3 → | |
| | | | English Step By Step with Pictures | | | |
| PRE-VOCATIONAL | | | | **Speaking Up at Work** | | |
| | | | | | **ESL for Action** → | |
| CITIZENSHIP | | | | **A Handbook for Citizenship** | | |
| ACTIVITIES | Games and Butterflies → | | | | | |
| VOCABULARY | Oxford Picture Dictionary of American English → | | | | | |

* Titles in **BOLD** print were reviewed and selected as a result of this project.
Light print indicates titles already in the RDP collection.

# APPENDIX 3

## BIBLIOGRAPHY OF CURRICULUM MATERIALS

**Before Book One: Listening Activities for Prebeginning Students of English** plus Teacher's Guide. John R. Boyd and Mary Ann Boyd. Prentice Hall Regents, 1982.*

**A Conversation Book: English in Everyday Life Book 1**, sec. ed., Prentice Hall, 1985.

**The Emergency English Workbook** and **Emergency English: A Handbook for Tutors**. Martha A. Lane. Kendall/Hunt, distributed by Sun Belt Literacy, 1982.

**English Step by Step with Pictures**, rev. ed. and **English Step by Step with Pictures Workbook**. Ralph S. Boggs and Robert J. Dixson. Prentice Hall Regents, 1980-3.

**Entry to English: English as a Second Language**. Books 1, 2, 3 and 4 plus Teacher's Editions 1, 2, 3 and 4. Kathleen Kelley Beal. Steck-Vaughn, 1982.

**ESL for Action-Problem Posing at Work**. Elsa Roberts Auerbach and Nina Wallerstein. Addison-Wesley, 1986.

**Essential Idioms in English**, new rev. ed., Robert J. Dixson. Prentice Hall Regents, 1983.

**Expressways: English for Conversation 1**. Steven J. Molinsky and Bill Bliss. Prentice Hall, 1988.

**Expressways: English for Conversation-Foundations**. Steven J. Molinsky and Bill Bliss. Prentice Hall, 1988.

**From the Start: Beginning Listening Book 1**. Jann Huizenga. Longman, 1987.*

**Games & Butterflies**. Katherine Kennedy and Ellen Sarkisian. New Readers Press, 1979.

**Good Days and Bad Days**. Maybeth Conway-Cassidy and others. Developed and published under a Health and Human Services grant to the New Jersey Office of Adult Basic Education, Department of Education, n.d.

**Grammarwork: English Exercises in Context**. Books 1, 2, and 3. Pamela Breyer. Prentice Hall Regents, 1982.

**A Handbook for Citizenship**, rev. ed., Margaret Seely. Alemany Press, 1980.

**Handwriting Workbook: Manuscript**. Walter B. Barbe. Zaner-Bloser, 1977.

**Idea Exchange I**. Linda Lonon Blanton. Newbury House, 1988.

**Idioms in American Life**. Julie Howard. Prentice Hall, 1987.

**The Immigrant Experience-Interactive Multiskill ESL**. Dennis Johnson and Joan Young. Prentice Hall Regents, 1987.*

**Improving Your Handwriting: Imaginary Line Handwriting Series**. Rebecca Mae Townsend. Steck-Vaughn, 1978.

**Laubach Way to English-ESOL** plus Teacher's Manual; illustrations for Skill Books 1 and 2; Skill Books 1 and 2. Jeanette D. Macero. New Readers Press, 1977.

**Lifelines: Coping Skills in English**. Books 1 and 2. Barbara H. Foley and Howard Pomann. Prentice Hall Regents, 1981-2.

**Listen to Me! Beginning Listening Comprehension**. Barbara H. Foley. Newbury House, 1985.*

**Looking at American Signs: A Pictorial Introduction to American Language and Culture**. Jann Huizenga. Voluntad, a subsidiary of National Textbook Co., 1985.

**No Hot Water Tonight**, 2nd ed., Jean Bodman and Michael Lanzano. Macmillan, 1986.

**Oxford Picture Dictionary of American English, Monolingual Edition**. E.C. Parnwell. Oxford University Press, 1984.

**Side by Side: English Through Guided Conversations**. Book One and Book Two. Steven J. Molinsky and Bill Bliss. Prentice Hall, 1980-1.*

**Spaghetti, Again? A Beginning Reader in English**. Jean W. Bodman and Judith B. McKoy. Macmillan, 1988.

**Speak Up: Beginning Pronunciation and Task Listening**. Cheryl Pavlik. Newbury House, 1985.*

**Speaking Up at Work** plus Teacher's Guide. Oxford University Press, 1985.

**Survival English: English Through Conversations** and **Survival English: English Through Conversations, Book 2** plus Teacher's Guides 1 and 2. Lee Mosteller and Bobbi Paul. Prentice Hall, 1985.

**True Stories in the News**. Sandra Heyer. Longman, 1987.

**Whaddaya Say?** Nina Weinstein. Prentice Hall, 1982.*

**What's the Story? Sequential Photographs for Language Practice**. Books 1, 2 and 3 and set of wall charts. Linda Markstein and Dorien Grunbaum. Longman, 1981.

* Contact publisher about purchase of tape(s).

# APPENDIX 4

## PUBLISHERS

Addison-Wesley Publishing Company
World Language Division
Reading, MA 01867
(617) 944-3700

Alemany Press
2501 Industrial Pkwy. West, Dept. PR 62
Hayward, CA 94545
(415) 887-7070 (800) 227-2375

Delta Systems Co., Inc.
570 Rock Road Dr., Unit H
Dundee, IL 60118
(312) 551-9595 (800) 323-8270

Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co.
see Sun Belt Literacy, Inc.

Longman, Inc.
95 Church St.
White Plains, NY 10601
(914) 993-5000

Macmillan Publishing Co.
866 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10022
(800) 257-8247

New Jersey State Department of Education
Office of Adult Basic Education
Box CN 305
Trenton, NJ 08625
(609) 588-3153

New Readers Press
1320 Jamesville Avenue, Box 131
Syracuse, NY 13210
(315) 422-9121 (800) 448-8878

Newbury House Publishers
54 Church St.
Cambridge, MA 02138
(617) 492-0670

Oxford University Press
ELT Order Dept.
200 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10016
(212) 679-7300

Prentice Hall, Inc.
Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632
(201) 767-5937 (800) 223-1360

Prentice Hall Regents (same as above)

Steck-Vaughn Company
P.O. Box 26015
Austin, TX 78755
(512) 476-6721 (800) 531-5015

Sun Belt Literacy, Inc.
1401 SW Topeka Blvd.
Topeka, KS 66612
(913) 234-2806

Voluntad
National Textbook Co.
4225 West Touhy Avenue
Lincolnwood, IL 60646-1975
(800) 323-4900

Zaner-Bloser
2300 W. Fifth Avenue
P.O. Box 16764
Columbus, OH 43216-6764
(614) 486-0221